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VIKRAMADITYA

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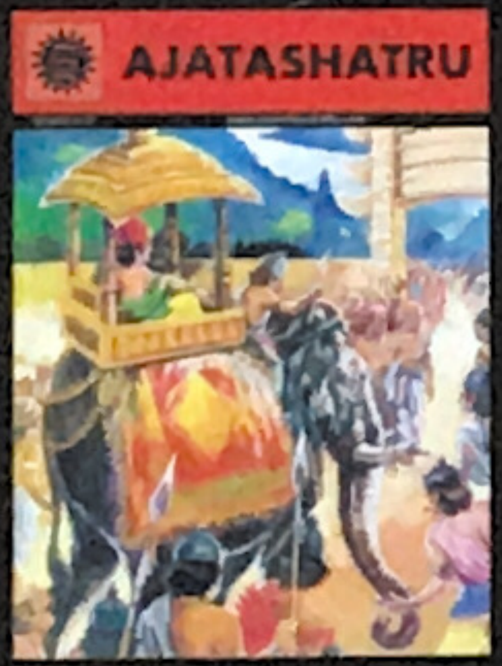

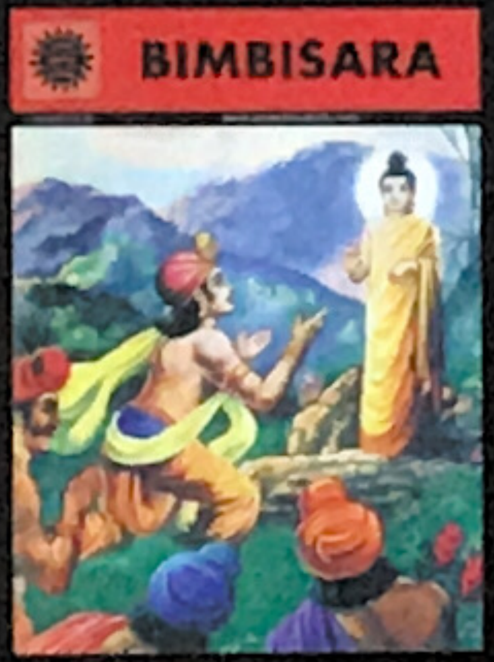

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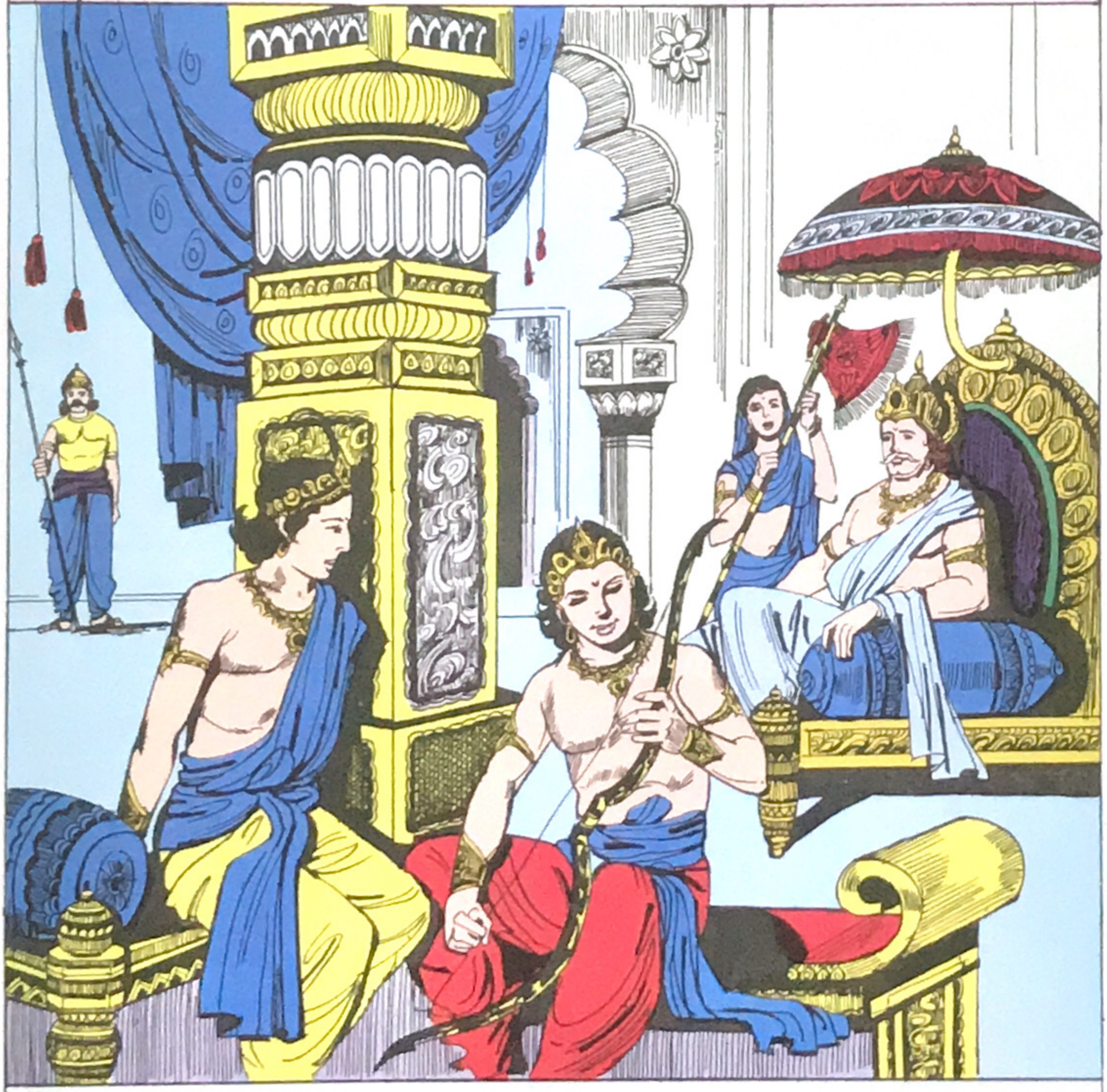
Vikramaditya



ABOUT 1,600 YEARS AGO, A VAST PART OF INDIA WAS RULED BY A GREAT KING, SAMUDRAGUPTA. PATALIPUTRA WAS ITS CAPITAL. THE KING HAD TWO SONS - RAMAGUPTA AND CHANDRAGUPTA.

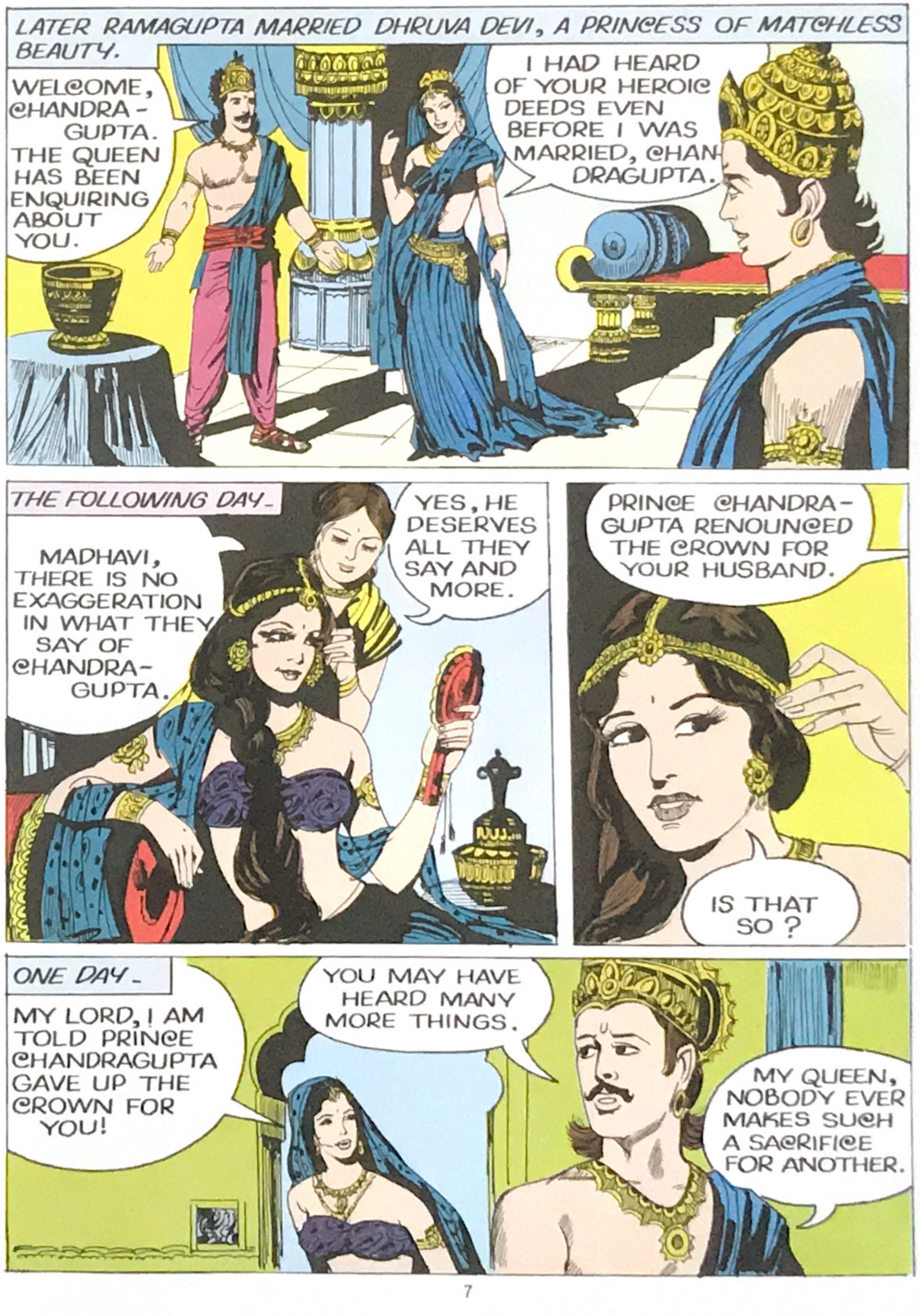
THEY HAD A NUMBER OF PLAYMATES, SONS OF THEIR FATHER'S MINISTERS AND OFFICERS. ONE DAY –
PRASEN, SHALL WE GO TO THE RIVER BANK TO PLAY?
THAT WILL BE GREAT FUN!
THE RIVER BANK IS HAUNTED BY WILD BEASTS. LET US SEE WHAT FATHER SAYS.
THEY WENT TO THE KING.
MAY WE GO TO THE RIVER BANK FOR A WALK?
CERTAINLY MY SONS; YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR.

AS THEY PLAYED ON THE RIVER BANK –
RUN PRINCE CHANDRAGUPTA, RUN. A LION IS COMING THIS WAY!
CHANDRAGUPTA, RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!
BUT CHANDRAGUPTA STOOD HIS GROUND.
LET IT COME. I'LL FACE IT.
AS THE LION ATTACKED HIM, CHANDRAGUPTA SIDE-STEPPED AND –
RAMAGUPTA, HE IS BRAVE, ISN'T HE?
HE WAS JUST TRYING TO SHOW OFF.

AS THE PRINCES DID NOT RETURN IN TIME, SAMUDRAGUPTA HAD SENT HIS SOLDIERS TO LOOK FOR THEM.
OH-OH! A DEAD LION AT THE FEET OF PRINCE CHANDRAGUPTA!
THE SOLDIERS RUSHED BACK AND INFORMED SAMUDRAGUPTA.
THAT'S LIKE MY SON. I HOPE HE IS NOT HURT.
AT THAT MOMENT THE PRINCES AND THEIR FRIENDS ARRIVED FOLLOWED BY A CHEERING CROWD.
I SAW HIM KILLING THE LION!
HE IS FEARLESS INDEED!

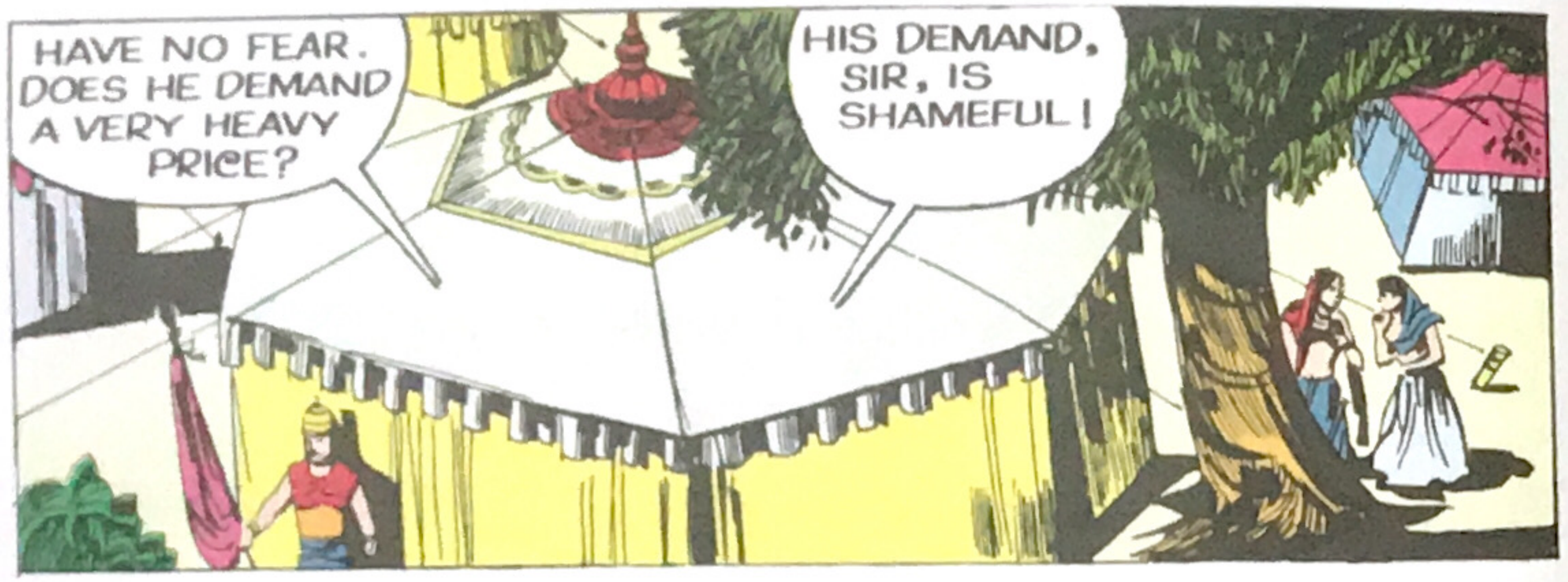
WON'T YOU REWARD THE PRINCE, MAHARAJ?
HOW SHALL I REWARD YOU, MY SON? AH! YOU WILL BEAR THE BURDENS OF THIS VAST KINGDOM OF MINE!
MINISTER, DID YOU HEAR THAT?
DON'T WORRY, MY PRINCE! AS FAR AS I CAN HELP IT, YOUR RIGHT WILL NOT BE TAKEN AWAY FROM YOU!
A FEW YEARS LATER, WHEN SAMUDRAGUPTA DIED...
MINISTER, PLEASE SEND FOR THE ROYAL PRIEST TO PERFORM MY CROWNING CEREMONY.
DON'T BE IMPATIENT, PRINCE RAMAGUPTA!

CHANDRAGUPTA MIGHT...
IT'S TOO SOON. YOUR FATHER'S ASHES ARE STILL WARM.
WHEN A FEW DAYS HAD GONE BY –
YOUR HOLINESS, PLEASE MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS TO CROWN PRINCE RAMAGUPTA.
BUT OUR LATE MAHARAJ HAD WISHED PRINCE CHANDRAGUPTA TO SUCCEED HIM.
BUT PRASEN! THE RIGHT OF SUCCESSION IS MY ELDER BROTHER'S.
THE CROWNING CEREMONY WAS PERFORMED.
MAY YOU SAFEGUARD THE TRADITIONS OF YOUR ANCESTORS AND THE COUNTRY, SIRE!
HE WILL SAFEGUARD NEITHER OF THE TWO. TAKE MY WORD FOR IT.


LATER RAMAGUPTA MARRIED DHRUVA DEVI, A PRINCESS OF MATCHLESS BEAUTY.
WELCOME, CHANDRAGUPTA. THE QUEEN HAS BEEN ENQUIRING ABOUT YOU.
I HAD HEARD OF YOUR HEROIC DEEDS EVEN BEFORE I WAS MARRIED, CHANDRAGUPTA.
THE FOLLOWING DAY.
MADHAVI, THERE IS NO EXAGGERATION IN WHAT THEY SAY OF CHANDRAGUPTA.
YES, HE DESERVES ALL THEY SAY AND MORE.
PRINCE CHANDRAGUPTA RENOUNCED THE CROWN FOR YOUR HUSBAND.
IS THAT SO?
ONE DAY.
MY LORD, I AM TOLD PRINCE CHANDRAGUPTA GAVE UP THE CROWN FOR YOU!
YOU MAY HAVE HEARD MANY MORE THINGS.
MY QUEEN, NOBODY EVER MAKES SUCH A SACRIFICE FOR ANOTHER.

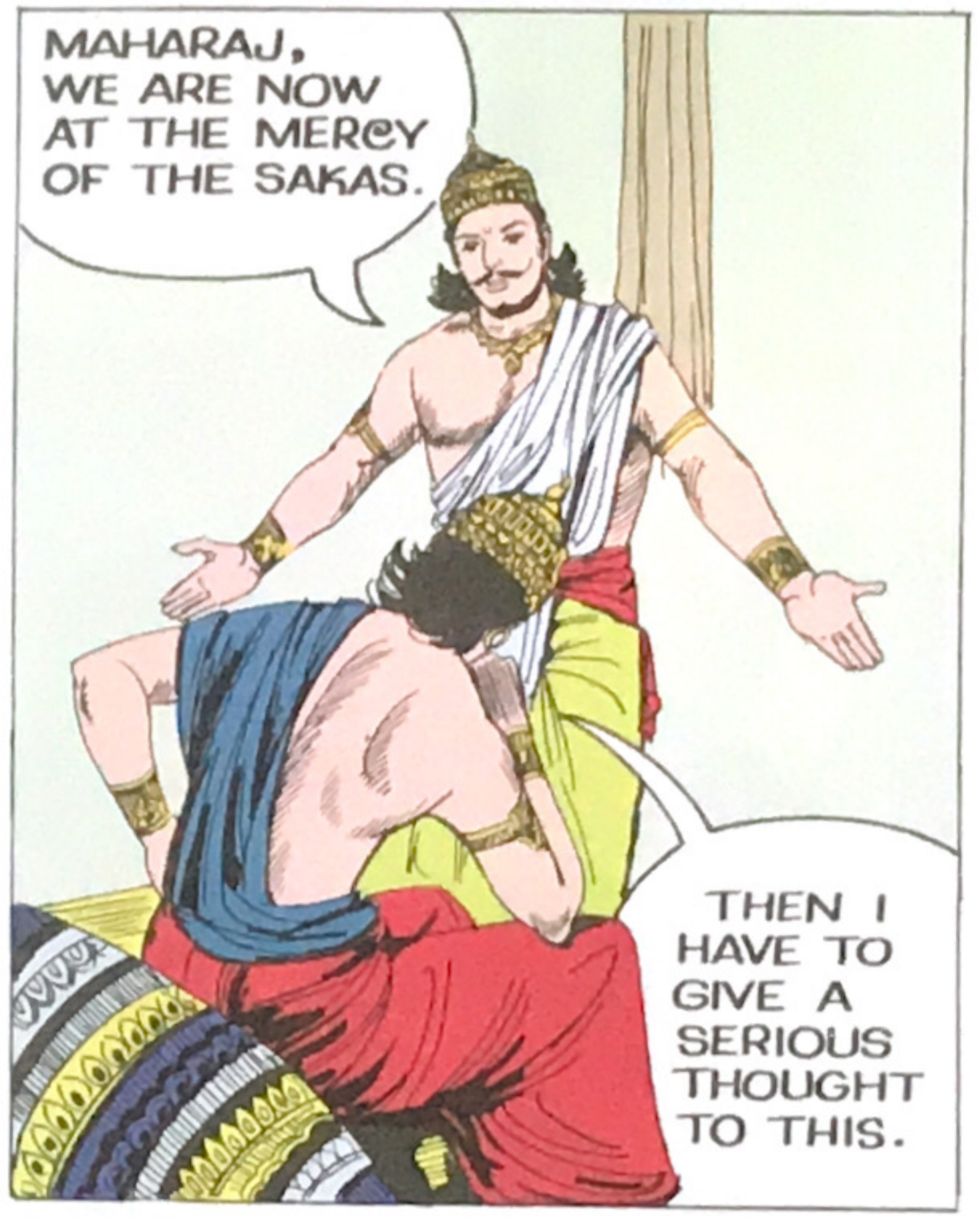
SOME MONTHS LATER, THE KING WENT ON AN EXPEDITION TO THE SOUTHERN REGION OF THE KINGDOM. WHEN IT GREW DARK, THEY ALL CAMPED NEAR A RIVER.
NEXT MORNING WHEN THEY STARTED MARCHING AHEAD -
I HEAR TRUMPETS - A WARNING SIGNAL.
SOON A SOLDIER CAME RUSHING TO THE KING.
MAHARAJ, THE PASS AHEAD IS IN THE HANDS OF THE SAKAS. WE CAN'T GO FARTHER.

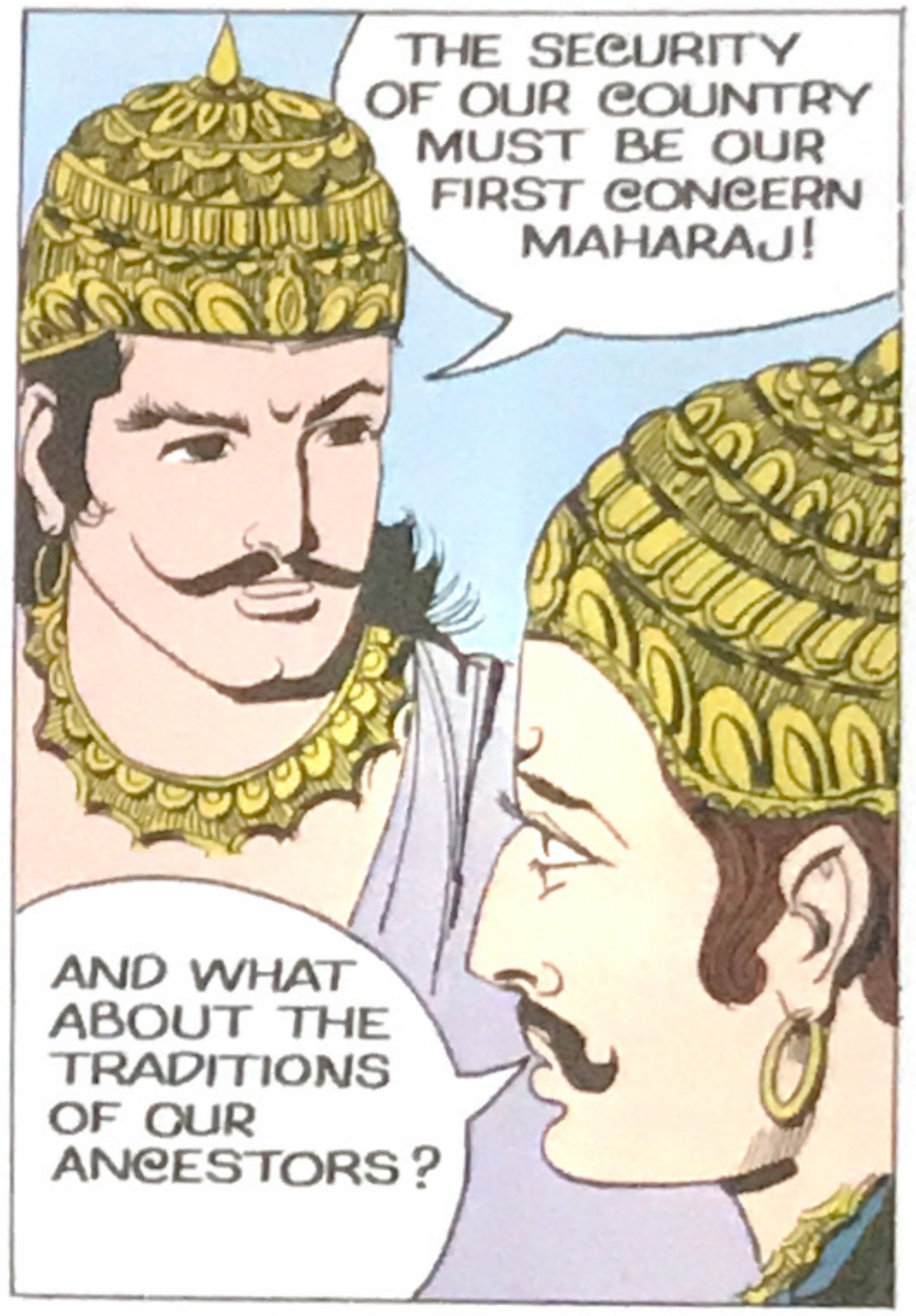
SOME TIME LATER -
I BRING BAD NEWS, O KING! THE PASS THROUGH WHICH WE CAME HAS ALSO BEEN CAPTURED BY THE SAKAS WE ARE TRAPPED!
WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW? WE WILL BE MASSACRED. FIND SOME WAY OUT, MINISTER.
FIND OUT WHAT THE SAKA KING WANTS. OFFER HIM A PEACE TREATY.
A TREATY? IS THERE NO ALTERNATIVE?
GO AWAY FROM HERE. DON'T MEDDLE IN THE MATTERS OF STATE.
SOON THE KING'S MESSENGER RETURNED.
WHAT DOES THE SAKA KING SAY?
MAHARAJ, I DON'T DARE REPEAT IT! !

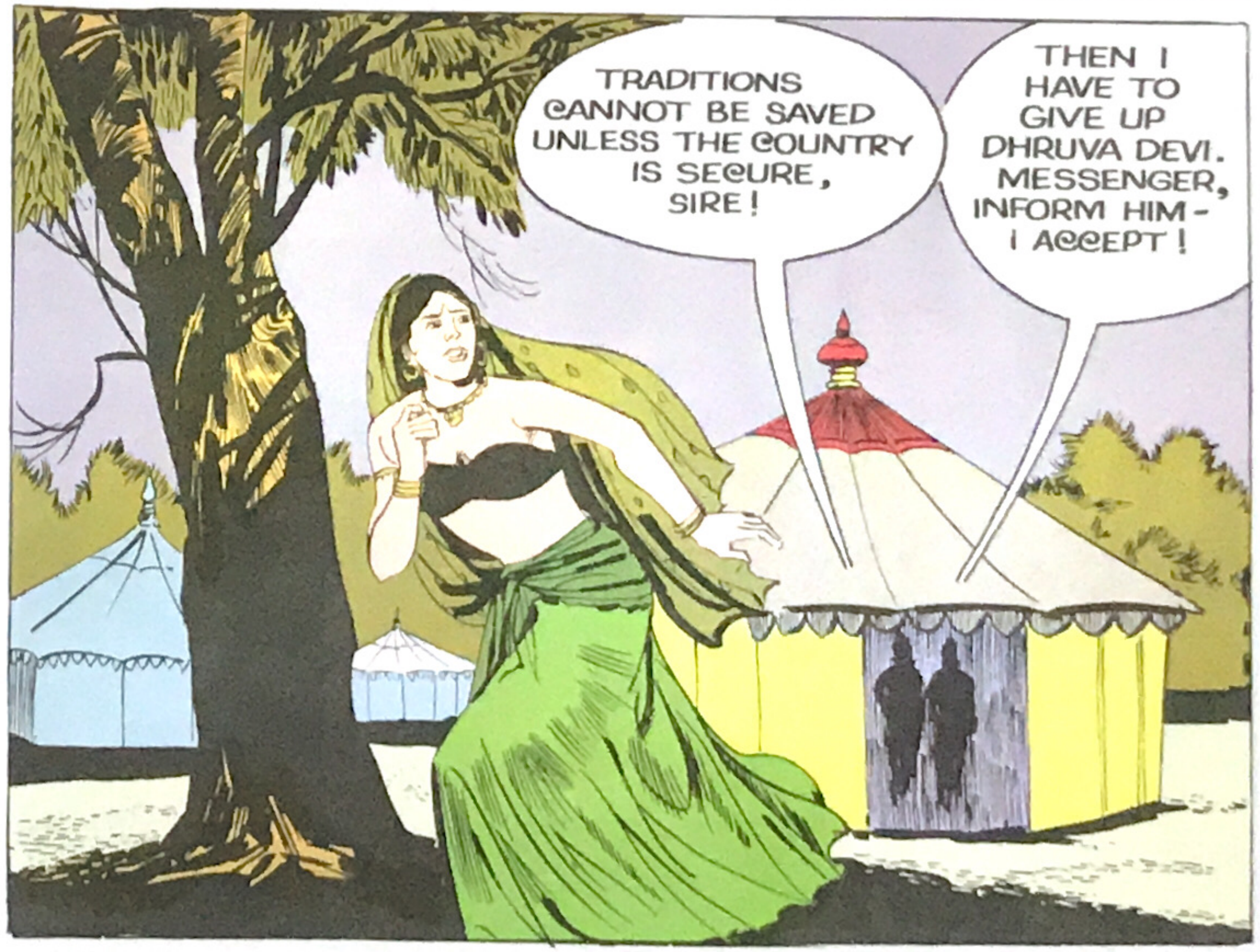

HAVE NO FEAR. DOES HE DEMAND A VERY HEAVY PRICE?
HIS DEMAND, SIR, IS SHAMEFUL!

I'LL PAY ANY PRICE FOR PEACE!
MAHARAJ, HE SAID MAHARANI DHRUVA DEVI WAS TO HAVE BEEN MARRIED TO HIM, A LONG TIME AGO!

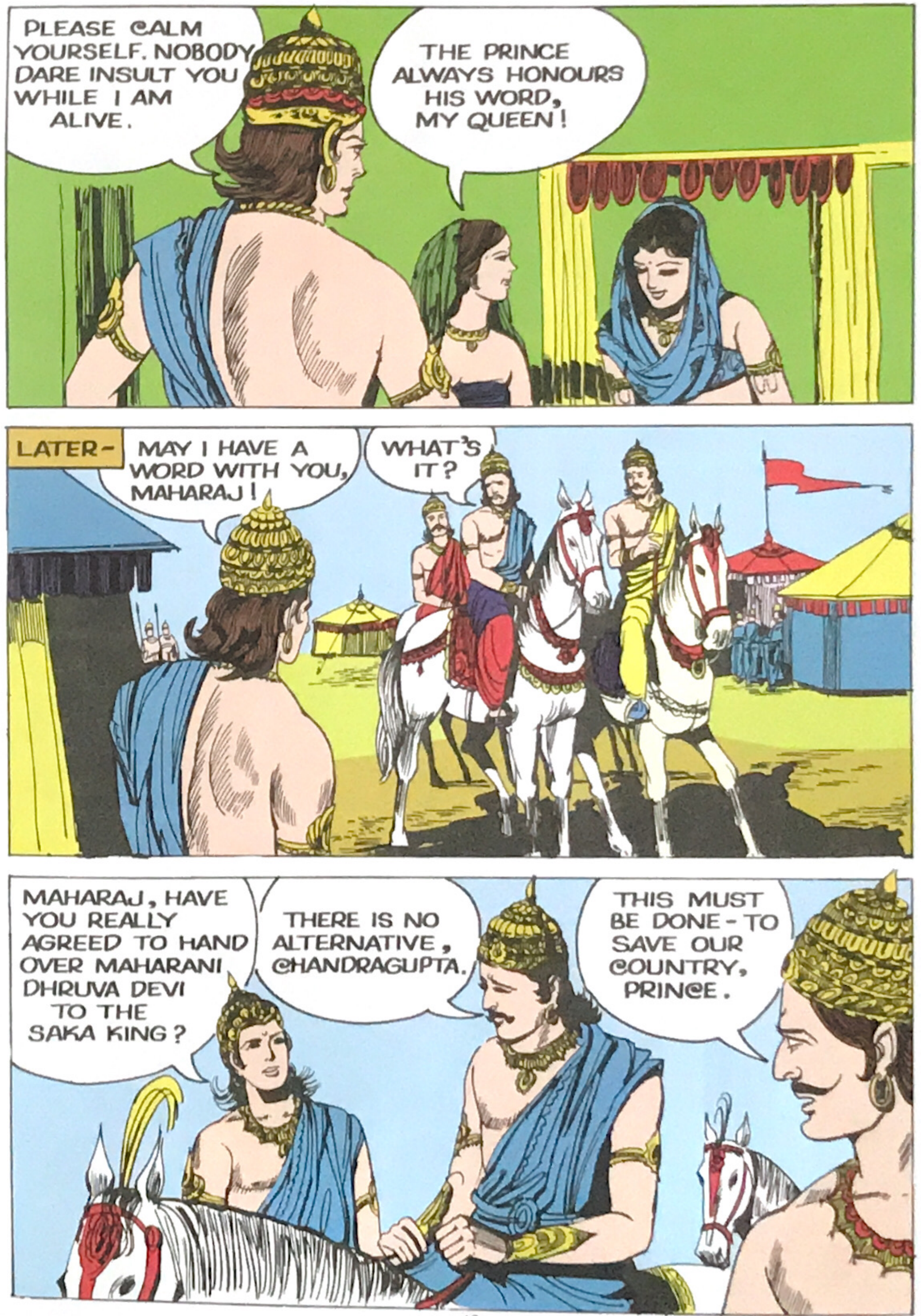
HE DEMANDS THE HAND OF OUR QUEEN?
THAT'S RIGHT!
THIS IS RIDICULOUS. ISN'T THERE ANOTHER WAY OUT?


MAHARAJ, WE ARE NOW AT THE MERCY OF THE SAKAS.
THEN I HAVE TO GIVE A SERIOUS THOUGHT TO THIS.


THE SECURITY OF OUR COUNTRY MUST BE OUR FIRST CONCERN MAHARAJ!
AND WHAT ABOUT THE TRADITIONS OF OUR ANCESTORS?


TRADITIONS CANNOT BE SAVED UNLESS THE COUNTRY IS SECURE, SIRE!
THEN I HAVE TO GIVE UP DHRUVA DEVI. MESSENGER, INFORM HIM - I ACCEPT!

DISASTER HAS BEFALLEN US, MAHARANI !
WHAT IS IT, MADHAVI ? HAS MAHARAJ AGREED TO A TREATY ?
YES - AND YOU ARE THE PRICE !
DID I HEAR YOU RIGHT, MADHAVI ?
MAHARANI, I OVERHEARD THE WHOLE DISCUSSION !
ISN'T THERE ANYBODY TO SAVE ME FROM THIS MORTAL INSULT ?
YES, THERE IS - PRINCE CHANDRAGUPTA ALONE CAN HELP YOU.
IS THAT REALLY POSSIBLE ? HURRY ! GO TO HIM.
LATER-
MADHAVI HAS TOLD ME ALL, O QUEEN !
PRINCE, YOUR BROTHER HAS BETRAYED ME.


PLEASE CALM YOURSELF. NOBODY DARE INSULT YOU WHILE I AM ALIVE.
THE PRINCE ALWAYS HONOURS HIS WORD, MY QUEEN !
LATER-
MAY I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU, MAHARAJ !
WHAT'S IT ?
MAHARAJ, HAVE YOU REALLY AGREED TO HAND OVER MAHARANI DHRUVA DEVI TO THE SAKA KING ?
THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE, CHANDRAGUPTA.
THIS MUST BE DONE - TO SAVE OUR COUNTRY, PRINCE.

I WILL NEVER ALLOW THIS!
THEN - DO YOU WANT ME KILLED?
NO YOU WILL NOT BE HARMED- NOR WILL THE QUEEN BE GIVEN UP TO THE SAKA KING!
HOW CAN THIS BE?
YOU WILL KNOW ALL-IN TIME!
BUT THE RESPONSIBILITY WILL BE YOURS WHOLLY!
THE DAY DHRUVA DEVI WAS TO BE HANDED OVER TO THE SAKA KING -
PRINCE, YOU ARE DOING THIS FOR ME!
MAHARANI, THE PRINCE LOOKS. AS IF HE IS YOUR TWIN!
EXACTLY WHAT I WANT TO LOOK LIKE! NOW WAIT AND WATCH!

THE SWORD IS WELL HIDDEN - ISN'T IT MADHAVI?
YES, PRINCE, COMPLETELY. NO ONE WILL EVER SUSPECT!
THEN, PERMIT ME TO DEPART, DEVI!
GOD BE WITH YOU PRINCE!
TAKE AWAY THE PALANQUIN.
HAIL, BHAVANI!
THE PALANQUIN APPROACHED THE SAKA KING'S CAMP.
OUR SAKA KING DESERVED THIS MOST BEAUTIFUL OF WOMEN - AND HE HAS GOT HER!
WITH AN ARMY LIKE HIS, HE IS INVINCIBLE!

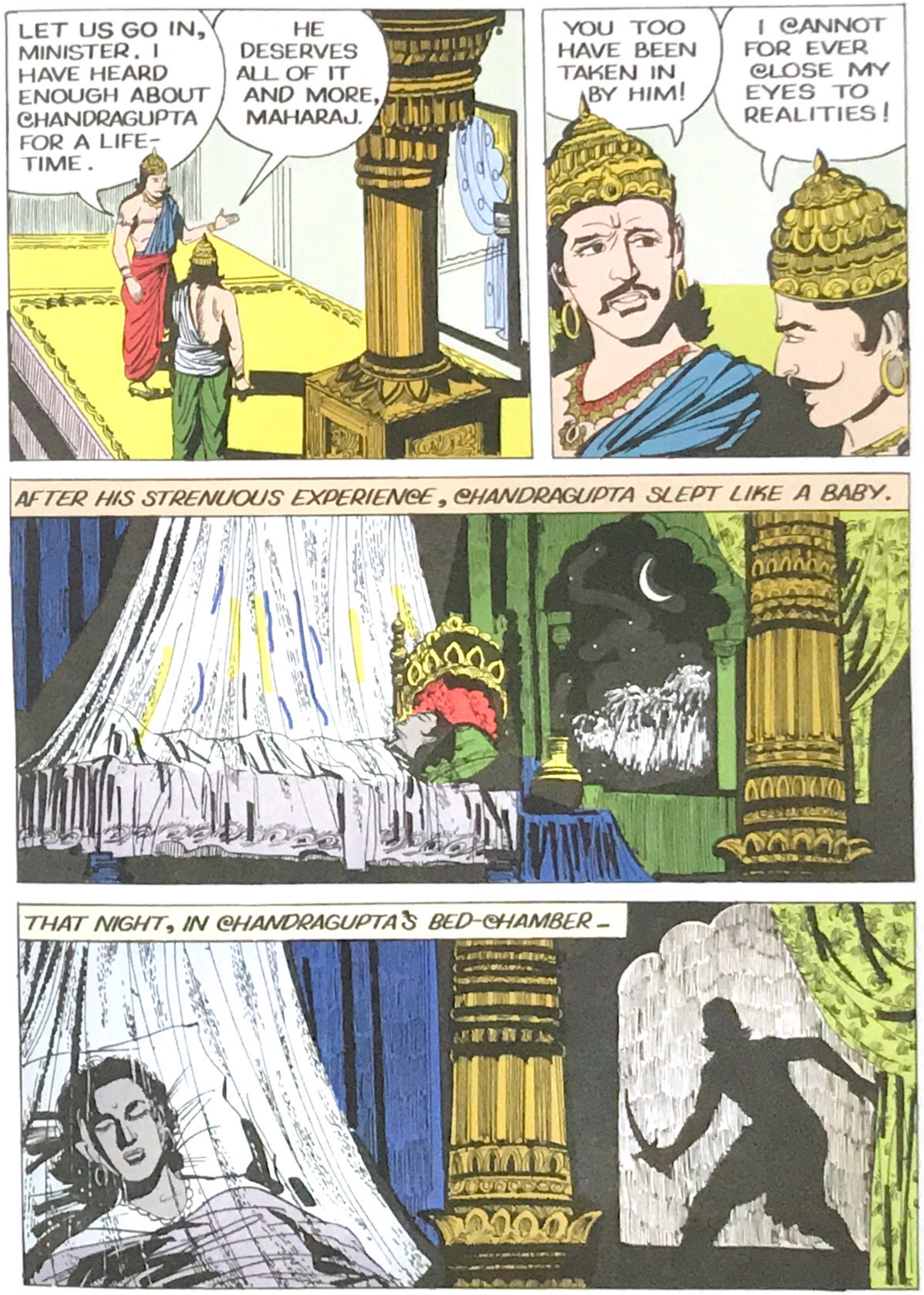
O SAKA KING. MAHARANI DHRUVA DEVI'S PALANQUIN IS ALMOST HERE!
ARE YOU ALL SET TO ACCORD HER A ROYAL RECEPTION?
YES SIRE!
TELL THE GUARDS AND SOLDIERS TO LEAVE!
MY CHERISHED DREAM IS ABOUT TO COME TRUE!
WELCOME, MAHARANI DHRUVA DEVI. YOU ARE NOW THE CONSORT OF THE SAKA KING - NOT OF THAT COWARD RAMAGUPTA.

YOU SCOUNDREL!
OH! I HAVE BEEN TRICKED!
TAKE THIS - YOUR JUST MEET!
THE SAKA KING FELL WOUNDED. CHANDRAGUPTA'S MEN ENTERED THE CAMP.
BE ALERT, SOLDIERS! NO SAKA SHOULD ESCAPE!
YOUR ORDERS WILL BE CARRIED OUT, MAHARAJ!

AND, ALSO, NOTIFY THE SQUAD WAITING CLOSE BY.
VERY WELL!
IN A SHORT WHILE, THOUSANDS OF SAKA TROOPS WERE PUT TO DEATH.
VICTORY TO PRINCE CHANDRAGUPTA!
LONG LIVE MAHARANI DHRUVA DEVI!

HUNDREDS OF SAKA SOLDIERS AND OFFICERS WERE TAKEN PRISONERS.
OUR KING, THE GREAT CONQUEROR, IS NO MORE!
SPARE OUR LIVES - WE BEG OF YOU, COMMANDER.
YOU WILL BE BANISHED FROM THIS COUNTRY!
BUT IF YOU DARE TO RETURN...
...YOU WILL BE PUT TO DEATH!

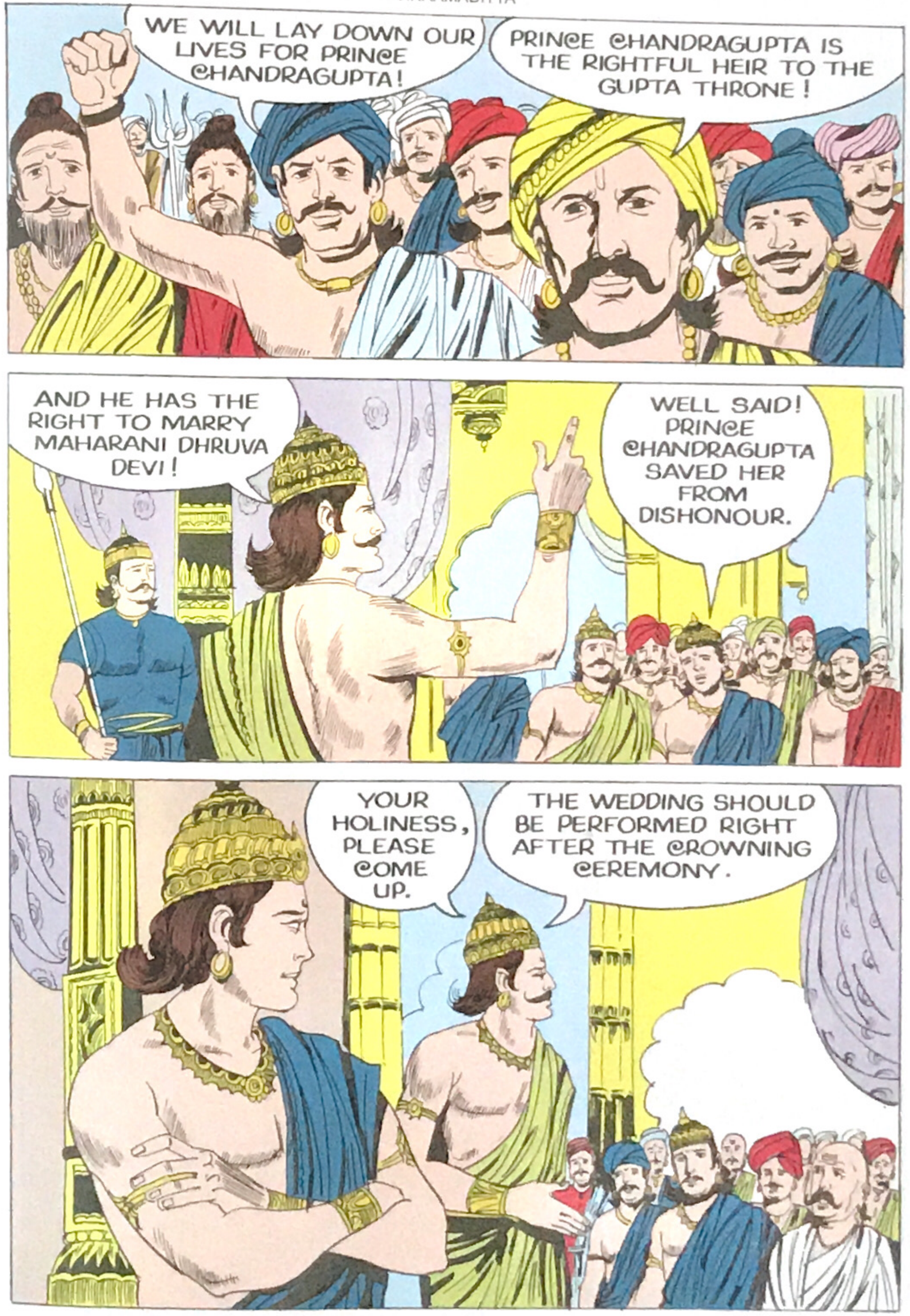
INFORMED OF THE SAKA DEBACLE, RAMAGUPTA AND DHRUVA DEVI ARRIVED ON THE SCENE.
I AM VERY PLEASED WITH YOU, CHANDRAGUPTA. YOU WILL BE REWARDED WELL.
I AM INDEBTED TO YOU, FOR EVER, PRINCE.
ON THEIR RETURN TO THE CAPITAL_
VICTORY TO CHANDRAGUPTA!
HAIL MAHARANI DHRUVA DEVI!
CHANDRAGUPTA WAS THE CHOSEN HEIR TO THE GUPTA THRONE!
MAHARAJ SAMUDRAGUPTA HAD HIMSELF NOMINATED HIM!
RAMAGUPTA IS A COWARD. HE HAS NO RIGHT TO BE THE KING.


LET US GO IN, MINISTER. I HAVE HEARD ENOUGH ABOUT CHANDRAGUPTA FOR A LIFE-TIME.
HE DESERVES ALL OF IT AND MORE, MAHARAJ.
YOU TOO HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN BY HIM!
I CANNOT FOR EVER CLOSE MY EYES TO REALITIES!
AFTER HIS STRENUOUS EXPERIENCE, CHANDRAGUPTA SLEPT LIKE A BABY.
THAT NIGHT, IN CHANDRAGUPTA'S BED-CHAMBER_

HEY! WHO'S THAT?
OH! GOD! IT IS YOU!

IN THE COURT NEXT DAY.
I HAVE SAD NEWS FOR YOU. MAHARAJ RAMAGUPTA IS DEAD.
THE COWARD DESERVED IT!
IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, HE MADE A DASTARDLY ATTEMPT ON PRINCE CHANDRAGUPTA'S LIFE!
AT THAT MOMENT A THRONG OF PEOPLE ENTERED THE COURT.
VICTORY TO CHANDRAGUPTA!
HE CAN SAFEGUARD THE COUNTRY AND THE GUPTA TRADITIONS!
YES, PRINCE CHANDRAGUPTA IS THE RIGHTFUL HEIR TO THE GUPTA THRONE.

THE HONOURED THRONE OF THE GUPTAS SHOULD NOT REMAIN VACANT FOR A MOMENT.
PRINCE CHANDRAGUPTA MUST INSTANTLY BE CROWNED.
I HAVE A SERIOUS PROPOSAL TO MAKE TO YOU, GENTLEMEN!
IS HE AGAIN TRYING TO PLAY SOME MISCHIEF?
IT IS HE WHO SET PRINCE RAMAGUPTA ON THE THRONE.
PRINCE CHANDRA-GUPTA SAVED THE HONOUR OF BOTH HIS COUNTRY AND HIS ANCESTORS.
SO HE REALISED IT AFTER ALL!


WE WILL LAY DOWN OUR LIVES FOR PRINCE CHANDRAGUPTA!
PRINCE CHANDRAGUPTA IS THE RIGHTFUL HEIR TO THE GUPTA THRONE!
AND HE HAS THE RIGHT TO MARRY MAHARANI DHRUVA DEVI!
WELL SAID! PRINCE CHANDRAGUPTA SAVED HER FROM DISHONOUR.
YOUR HOLINESS, PLEASE COME UP.
THE WEDDING SHOULD BE PERFORMED RIGHT AFTER THE CROWNING CEREMONY.

AFTER THE CROWNING CEREMONY_
MAY GOD BLESS YOU.
VICTORY TO MAHARAJ CHANDRAGUPTA!
THE BURDEN OF DEFENDING THE COUNTRY IS NOW YOURS, MAHARAJ CHANDRA-GUPTA.
THIS IS AN AUSPICIOUS DAY. WHY NOT PERFORM THE WEDDING NOW?
WILL IT BE APPROPRIATE, HOLI PRIEST?
WELL, WELL...
THE CONSENT OF MAHARAJ CHANDRAGUPTA AND MAHARANI DHRUVA DEVI HAS TO BE OBTAINED.
YOUR DECISION WILL BE BINDING ON ME!
I ACCEPT THE WILL OF MAHARAJ CHANDRAGUPTA, THE MINISTER AND OUR PEOPLE.

THE WEDDING WAS SOLEMNISED_
MINISTER, PLEASE ASK THE PEOPLE TO STAY AWHILE!
I HAVE TO MAKE A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

MY COUNTRYMEN, AS YOU WILL BE MY WITNESS, I WILL NOT REST UNTIL I HAVE DRIVEN EVERY SINGLE SAKA OUT OF OUR COUNTRY.
IT WILL BE MY ENDEAVOUR TO KEEP THIS PROMISE ALIVE AND FRESH IN THE MIND OF OUR MAHARAJ.
DHRUVA DEVI KEPT HER WORD. ONE DAY, AT THE COURT IN UJJAINI –
YOU ARE A GREAT POET, KALIDASA! I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE DRAMA 'SHAKUNTALA' ENACTED AGAIN NEXT FULL-MOON DAY. WOULDN'T YOU, DEVI?
THERE IS GREAT CHARM IN THE POET'S WRITINGS. BUT MAHARAJ...

LATER IN THE PALACE –
DEVI, YOU WANTED TO TELL ME SOMETHING IN THE COURT THIS EVENING. WHAT WAS IT?
MAHARAJ, HAVEN'T WE STAYED LONG ENOUGH AT THIS PLACE?
I LIKE THE PLACE. I LIKE THE PEOPLE.
THE PEOPLE HERE ADORE YOU BECAUSE YOU FREED THEM FROM SAKA DOMINATION. THEY ALL REFER TO YOU AS VIKRAMADITYA. BUT...

BUT THE SAKAS STILL RULE IN GUJARAT. IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT TO REMIND ME ABOUT?
YES AND NEAR THE BORDERS OF THIS COUNTRY THE KUSHANAS HARASS OUR PEOPLE.
SPURRED BY THE WORDS OF DHRUVA DEVI, CHANDRAGUPTA SOON LEFT ON A CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE SAKAS.
MAY VICTORY BE WITH YOU!
MONTHS LATER –
MAHARANI, A LETTER FOR YOU FROM THE EMPEROR.
THEN WHAT I HEARD MUST BE RIGHT. THE MAHARAJ MUST HAVE WON THE BATTLE AGAINST THE SAKAS OF GUJARAT!

YES, MADHAVI. THE LAST VESTIGE OF FOREIGN RULE HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM OUR LAND...
...AND THE MAHARAJ WILL BE COMING BACK SOON.
GREAT NEWS!
PEOPLE GAVE AN ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME TO THEIR HERO ON HIS RETURN.
LATER CHANDRAGUPTA WENT AS FAR AS BACTRIA, BEYOND THE HINDU KUSH MOUNTAINS AND DEFEATED THE KUSHANAS TOO.